

# THE ONTARIO ARGUS

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## A Comparison of Possibilities

Possibilities for the farmers of the Snake River Valley, of which Ontario is the center, are set forth in an article published in the *Sunset Magazine* for February. The story tells of the success of a farmer in the Boise Valley, a section with a higher altitude than the Snake River Valley, and consequently with seasons not so favorable. The nature of the soil is claimed to be better in this section, and taken all in all, the farmer of the Snake River Valley works under more favorable natural conditions, than his neighbor in the Boise Valley. The article follows:

### The Plant Wizard of Idaho

Up in sunny southern Idaho there is a man who with the assistance of his wife, is doing a work for the real and lasting benefit of humanity that is second only to that of the great Luther Burbank. Thomas A. Allen is his name as it appears on his bank check—just plain "Tom" to his friends.

Tom Allen is a farmer, but a farmer who is as different from the average as day is from night. He is not content to buy any old seeds that may be offered him, and then, after planting them, take care of them in hit-or-miss fashion. In some respects his is an ordinary story, in others as wonderful as a modern Arabian Nights; but through it all runs a moral that it will be well for every farmer to heed.

It begins just a little over twelve years ago when Allen was clerking behind the counter of his general merchandise store in the little town of Goldfield, Colorado, just as he had done day after day for years. In the course of his daily merchandising he had occasion to buy and sell quantities of farm products; some good, some bad, but mostly the latter. He knew what it meant for the producer as well as the merchant to endeavor to sell poor, inferior, ungraded products, and, foreseeing the possible profit to be derived from furnishing customers with the same excellence in farm products that they demand in manufactured articles, he then and there made up his mind to quit merchandising and try the game of the producer's end.

With the proceeds from the sale of his business Tom Allen purchased a small badly run-down farm in the Boise valley in Idaho, which, with his industry, perseverance and disregard for the old order of farming, he has made a veritable wonderland. Beginning with small capital and an unpromising acreage, he has made a produce farm, a beautiful home and acquired a comfortable competence, besides national fame as a plant breeder and exhibitor. He has accomplished many wonderful things agriculturally, and among numerous improvements on nature might be mentioned his seven-headed beardless rye. Through perseverance Allen is making it possible to increase the maximum yield of a given field of rye seven-fold; but he isn't stopping there; he is now engaged in making his seven-headed rye beardless, and those farmers who have ever grown and threshed rye can easily appreciate the benefit to be derived from this latest effort of the humble "Burbank of southern Idaho." With infinite patience Allen has gone on year after year breeding the barbs from his rye heads and when he harvested the crop from his experimental plot last fall was gratified to find that the beards had practically disappeared, justifying his hope to announce to the world the existence of an absolutely beardless rye with seven heads instead of one. At the same time he is experimenting with wheat and is about to bring out a new beardless variety with more grains to the head and more heads to the stalk.

Corn is another of the many grains Allen has experimented with and he has bred a number of new varieties. His Ada County Yellow Dent corn which produces 125 bushels to the acre in southern Idaho—a section which has been said to be unfitted for corn-growing on account of the cool nights—is his greatest achievement in this variety of grain. Old established prejudices of farmers in the intermontane country have been assailed and shattered by the agricultural wizard, and none more strongly than that corn cannot be grown on commercial basis in that section of the United States. For years he has been continually preaching that the farmers in the intermontane region should grow corn, and demonstrated by his efforts that it is a profitable commercial crop in that section, is practiced in a state-wide contest inaugurated in Idaho by one of the newspapers several years ago Allen won first honors and surprised the natives by producing 130 bushels of high quality corn to the acre—considered a phenomenal record for Idaho at that time, but which has been exceeded.

Tom Allen believes in work, and practices what he preaches. This will be believed when it becomes known that the Allen farm of sixty acres is cared for by Mr. and Mrs. Allen with the help of only one man, except in harvesting. Their industry will be better appreciated when it is realized that they have had as many as 600 varieties of fruits and vegetables and 400 varieties of grains and grasses growing and under experimentation on their farm at one time. One of Mr. Allen's pet hobbies is corn, and he has

had as many as 87 varieties at a time of this grain growing under his watchful eye.

At the National Land Show in Chicago, a number of years ago, the Allens created somewhat of a sensation and established an entirely new record with their exhibit, which was the most varied individual one ever shown at any fair or exposition. The exhibit contained over a thousand different varieties of grains, grasses, fruits and vegetables, all grown on the one farm; which exhibit incidentally taught the farmers of the East and Middle West what a vast variety of products could be successfully grown in irrigated southern Idaho.

Many exhibits prepared by the Allens have also been shown in the west during the past ten years. At the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition an exhibit of fruit won the silver medal. They also prepared the exhibit of several hundred bundles of grains and grasses for the Idaho state exhibit at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, and for the Payette-Boise Water Users' Association for exhibition at the Omaha Corn Show. The excellence of their exhibits at the annual Intermontane State Fairs at Boise finally resulted in the creation of a special class for the Allen entries. From the very first year that they exhibited at this fair, which was the first year after they arrived in Idaho, they won the annual sweepstakes—the most coveted prize in the agricultural division; this despite the fact that the banner agricultural counties of that region were competing exhibitors against this one farm and despite the further fact that the county exhibits were prepared through the efforts of the best farmers in the respective counties.

After seeing the Allen exhibit carry off the sweepstakes for nine years in succession, the directors of the Intermontane State Fair were finally compelled to create this special class for the exhibit three years ago, in order that entries from the various counties could be secured. This action on the part of the Fair directors was caused from the fact that despite the united efforts of commercial clubs, chambers of commerce, individual farmers and whole counties, the Allens were simply undefeatable.

At the first Seed Show ever conducted in the Intermontane country, and in competition with the best seed growers in a seed-growing section, Allen last winter captured the cream of the prizes, including the grand sweepstakes for the largest and best display of farm seeds.

Wizard Allen has met with success both in the breeding of new and better varieties and in a financial way; but it is just the same success with which any farmer can meet provided he has the same patience, perseverance and industry. For instance: How many farmers run their farms on a business basis? How many farmers can tell to the cent just how much profit they have derived from a certain crop? Allen can tell you all of this, in so far as it relates to his place. Even when he has over a thousand varieties under experimentation, all at one time, an accurate individual record has been kept of each. He used the same exact accounting methods for his farm were it a manufacturing plant, and still finds time to serve the farmers of his state as an officer of the State Grange, without pay, in addition to holding down the job of secretary of the State Grange Insurance Company.

### Not Turned Down

The Warm Springs Project has received no set-back—no slap—by reason of the fact that Secretary Lane, of the Interior Department selected, a few days ago, the Deschutes Project in Crook county as the most favorable project for reclamation work by the government. There is no doubt that the Secretary made a wise choice, considering the data and reports now in his hands. But the signal fact remains that the report of the Warm Springs Project is not yet completed, and, at the time the choice was made, the Secretary had not even a preliminary report of the Malheur Project at hand.

The report of the Warm Springs Project is now being compiled by Engineer John T. Whistler, at Portland, and will probably not be completed for another thirty or sixty days.

And although the Deschutes Project received the coveted designation the money appropriated cannot be used there. For the government appropriation was made contingent upon a like appropriation by the state of Oregon, and the Oregon legislature has adjourned without providing any money for this purpose.

The project in Crook county is undoubtedly one entitled to recognition, and it is to be regretted that it cannot make use of the money set aside by the government. We people of Malheur county realize how badly reclamation work is needed in eastern and central Oregon, and by reason of past disappointments, we are in a position to deeply sympathize with our sister county.

There is every prospect now, however, that the Warm Springs Project will be given the precedence over the Deschutes or any other Oregon project. For reports of the Warm Springs project will be in the hands of Secretary Lane before he is called upon to again designate a spot for reclamation work, and because of its superior qualifications, compared with any other Oregon project, it will undoubtedly be given the preference.

### Power Question

The towns of the lower Snake and Payette river valleys are getting together to maintain a united organization in dealing with the power interests. Huntington, Payette, Weiser, New Plymouth, Ontario, Emmett, Nyssa and Parma have agreed to cooperate, that all may follow the same policy in granting franchises and entering into contracts for lighting and electric irrigation pumping.

The history of the manipulations of the power interests as brought out in Judge Deidrichs Federal court at Boise, indicate that a movement is on foot to force all the power companies of this section into an electric combine. The three cornered fight that has been going on between the Idaho Oregon Light & Power Company, The Idaho Street Railway Company,

and the Beaver River Company is liable to lead to an ultimate capitalization of the electric power investment of such gigantic proportions, in this section, that even a low rate of interest on the actual investment in the duplicate lines and plans, will eventually amount to a great burden for the consumer to bear.

However the court records indicate that the Beaver River Company is now owned by the Boise Street Railway Company which now leaves only the Idaho-Oregon Light & Power, as the only independent Company on the outside.

All those who understand the situation in this section, seem to come to the same conclusion as to the proper course to pursue. That is first to try to negotiate with the independent company now in this field. The reason for so doing, is to avoid the building of duplicate lines and plants which must soon lead to consolidation, and then the consumer will be asked to pay maintenance and profit on two systems and interest on bonds issued for superficial construction.

The property of the Idaho-Oregon Light & Power Company is now owned by the bondholders of its first mortgage bonds, or at least will be their property as soon as the sale is confirmed by the court. The bondholders bid in the property at the receiver's auction in competition with the trust, which helps to determine a reasonable valuation on the property by which the Public Utilities Commission can arrive at a reasonable rate that the consumer can pay.

The electrical trust is now at Caldwell. Nampa and Boise and the major portion of the property of the Idaho-Oregon Light & Power Company is at Boise and within the territory embraced by these eight towns of the lower Snake and Payette river valleys, and to keep the Idaho-Oregon Light & Power Company in existence, it must have this territory. With the electrical trust at Caldwell, just outside of our door, seems to be the most satisfactory situation that will insure reasonable rates that will be permanent and satisfactory.

The bondholders have sent circular letters to all their patrons, stating they will announce a reduction in rates shortly after they are permitted to do so by the confirmation of the sale, which is expected in a few days.

### Free Tolls

A problem of vital importance to Ontario and sections tributary, both to the Oregon and Idaho sides, has come up this week in the form of proposed changes in the telephone service. There are two phases to the proposed changes, one in a raise in rates of the rural service, and the other an elimination of our free exchange service with Nyssa and Fruitland.

The intention to charge a rate of 15 cents for calls to or from Nyssa and Fruitland, has brought forth a storm of protest, and may involve a lawsuit. The protest, however, comes from a deeper source than the mere objection to paying a normal charge for communication with these two places. The change involves, and would compel, a complete reorganization in the trade status of this section. That the close trade and business relationship now existing between Fruitland, Nyssa and Ontario, and the fact that this will be broken, to the detriment of all three sections, has brought forth the protest, rather than the real expense which would be incurred, in case the fee should be charged.

Free exchange has been enjoyed between Ontario and Nyssa and Fruitland, for several years. It was a condition that was supposed to have become permanent, and was a condition that has been taken into consideration by practically every settler in the Nyssa and Fruitland section, who have come in the past few years.

This free service was established by the old independent company, doing business in Ontario before the present company was organized and purchased the property of the old independent company. One of the contending points when this deal was made, was the matter of free service with Nyssa and Fruitland, and when the transfer was eventually made, there was a clause inserted in the conveyance, providing for free toll to the two places mentioned.

The present company contends that with Fruitland, which lies in Idaho, there is an inter-state ruling affected which compels them to charge a toll. The local contention, however, is to the effect that there is no favoritism shown Ontario over Fruitland, nor to Fruitland over Ontario, and that so long as both places are on an equal basis, there is no danger of interference by the Inter-State Commerce Commission.

Relative to the change in rates of the rural telephones from a rental of \$18.00 per year, to a rate of \$24.00 per year, the same contract referred to above fixes the rate, or at least it said to bind a rate formerly established by the independent company, providing a rental of \$18.00 per year, if the charge was paid semi-annually in advance, and \$24.00 per year if not paid in advance. This phase is also being threshed out.

The fact remains, however, that in order to maintain the close business relationship between Fruitland, Nyssa and Ontario, it is necessary to arrange in some manner for free tolls between the three places. If this cannot be worked out satisfactorily with the present company, then it will be necessary to place a new independent service in the field. Such a move certainly has its drawbacks, and unless there was absolute necessity for it, would receive little or no support.

In the modern business world, the telephone is a necessity, something with which we cannot dispense. And free tolls with Nyssa and Fruitland have become as necessary to the local business status, as telephones alone are a necessity.